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THE
CHARACTER
OF A
WOMAN

*That NEVER WAS, and
NEVER will BE.*

Made *English* from the *French* of
MONSIEUR DE ST. EVREMOND.

*O (quam te memorem) Virgo! namq; haud tibi vultus
Mortalis, nec vox hominem sonat. O Dea certe.*
Virg. *Aeneid*. Lib. 1.

O Virgin! or what other Name you bear
Above that Stile; O more than mortal Fair!
Your Voice and Meen celestial Birth declare.

Printed in the Year 1718.

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Printed in the Year 1798.



M A D A M,

THE following Character was design'd by St. Evremond for the late Duchess of Mazarin. Were the Author now alive, he would have chang'd his Sentiments: Instead of pretending to give the World a Picture of her Grace, he would ingenuously have confess'd, that he drew it for Your Ladyship.

Nature and Fortune have conspir'd in Your Favour. I have often beheld and consider'd Your Charms; and the more I see them, the more I admire 'em. Nor am

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I less delighted with hearing, than with seeing you; Your Expressions are easy and natural, your Thoughts are just and lively, happy and polite.

There are a Thousand Beauties in You, which can never be describ'd. This Character therefore is not properly Yours, 'tis rather a Sketch of the Amiable —y, who is no where so Charming, so Beautiful and Agreeable, as she is in her self. I am,

M A D A M,

Your Ladyship's

Most Humble Servant.



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WOMAN

*That NEVER WAS, and
NEVER will BE.*

AMONGST all the Ladies, that have made me happy in their Conversation, I have constantly observ'd, that if some of their Qualities deserv'd my Admiration, there were others which were to be lightly pass'd over with

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all the Gentleness imaginable ; It being a Maxim universally receiv'd, that a general Applause can hardly consist with Truth, and Sincerity.

I am obliged to the amiable EMILIA for the Liberty I enjoy of following my Inclinations. I love to commend what is really beautiful, and I love to speak Truth.

As she does not stand in need of my Service, I am under no Temptation, either to act the Hypocrite, or the Flatterer. It is owing to Her, that I can be lavish and liberal in my Praises, without being complaisant. It is owing to Her, that the Criticks, forgetting that Delicacy of Judgment, which was only employ'd in finding out Faults, assume to themselves a second Nature; and
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by a strange and wonderful Transition lay aside their Censures, and celebrate her Praises.

NOTHING is more certain, than that most Ladies are more oblig'd to our Flatteries, than to their own intrinsick Merit, for the fine Encomiums we bestow upon them. But it is otherwise with EMILIA; the Justice we do her, is owing to her self; she is secure of the Applause of Mankind, she fears nothing but Silence.

IF her Enemies speak of Her, as they cannot act contrary to the Dictates of Conscience, they confess with equal Truth and Reluctance, that EMILIA'S sweet prevailing Charms command their Adoration. If again her Friends enlarge in her Praises, tho' they are deeply affected with her Me-

rit, yet they cannot add to it. Thus her Enemies are forced to speak Truth, notwithstanding their Malice; and her Friends, notwithstanding their great Veneration, are but strictly just to her. She expects no Favour, and she fears not Malice in the Judgments made of Her; But since all Men are at Liberty to speak or not, the only Injury that EMILIA can suffer, is from the malicious Silence of her Enemies.

To be more particular.

HER Features are no less regular than pleasing, which is almost a Miracle; for Nature seems often to take a Pleasure in making Things not regular agreeable; and those who are justly admir'd for their Beauty, do not always please. Her Eyes are sweet, yet piercing;

piercing; Her Complexion is no less smooth than florid; the Whiteness of her Teeth, and the Vermilion of her Lips, are Terms too common to describe a secret resistless Charm, which is above Description. Were it not for EMILIA, that delicate Turn of the lower Part of the Face, which the *Grecians* so much admir'd, wou'd be lost for ever; it wou'd no where exist, but in the Idea of some eminent Painter, or in the Descriptions of the ancient Poets; and to give Life and Spirit to the whole, she has a noble Vivacity in her Aspect, her Countenance is Fresh and Healthy, she is all that we can wish her.

HER Shape is easy and well proportion'd, 'tis small by degrees and beautifully less. Her Carriage is neither too constrain'd, nor too

negligent, which spoil a sweet and beautiful Deportment. Her Motions are graceful, her Air is noble, her Smiles are transporting, her Expressions are melting, and all her Actions are constantly attended with Love and Admiration.

HER Wit is of a large Extent, without being vast. She is never so far lost in Generals, but that she can easily recover her Thoughts, and confine them to Particulars. Her Penetration and Judgment are universal. In Conversation she knows perfectly well, when to speak, and when to be silent. Whatever she says flows naturally from her; in Matters of Moment she is never too vehement, and in Things of less Importance she is never unattentive.

Her

Her Thoughts are just, her Expressions lively, and both are attended with such an Air of Delicacy, with such unexpected, such inimitable Turns, as nothing can exceed them. As for those happy volatile Thoughts, which often fall from us without Design and Premeditation, she contemns and disdains them; How agreeable and diverting soever they may be, the Authors thereof are seldom regarded.

THERE is such a Dignity and Majesty in her Presence, that she seems a *Goddeſs*. You see as it were her Soul in her Countenance. Both her Soul and Body were made for each other.

BY Nature she is apt to be too magnificent, but her Circumstances force her to contradict her Nature; she rather chusing to li-

mit and restrain so noble a Passion, than put her self under the miserable Necessity of standing in need of the Assistance of others; she being resolv'd not to contract any Obligations, to be civil and kind to Strangers, warm and active in serving her Friends; but yet these wise and prudent Reflections do not utterly divest her of her generous Inclinations. No! they rather teach her to regulate her Temper in proportion to her Fortune; to gratify the one, yet not ruin the other.

HER good Sense and Address are eminently conspicuous in the Management of her Affairs. She freely and willingly gives into any thing which may be really advantageous either to her self, or Friends. A restless Spirit is her utter Aversion; she loves to be active,

active, but she would not be impertinent; she hates to be slothful, yet is a Lover of Tranquility.

HAVING given you the Description of so many fine and excellent Qualities; we are next to consider, what Influence they have upon us, what upon her.

THERE is something in her so Divine, something so Majestical, that she commands our Adoration; and then again, there is something in her so sweet, so engaging, that she charms our Affections; she makes us her Captives, and keeps us in Captivity; 'tis impossible to approach her and not love her; but who dares tell her that he loves?

COULD we look into her Heart, we should find in her Breast
the

the very same Sentiments, with which she inspires us; but as her Power over her self and us is equally great, she conquers and subdues those Desires by Reason, which the Fear of offending restrains in us.

SOME seem born without any Desires, others again are all over Transport; but with regard to EMILIA, tho' her Heart is full of Tenderness, its Motions are in absolute Subjection to her Reason. She never permits it to prevail so far as to bring her Judgment and Conduct into Question. She is far from affecting to be prais'd, and commended in Conversation. If Men of distinguish'd Merit extol her, she is content; her conscious Worth sets her as it were above Reflections, she fears not the secret Murmurs of the Envious, who

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who are jealous of her Pleasures,
and hate her for her Virtues.

WE know by Experience, that
Passion blinds the Understanding,
that Love establishes his Em-
pire in our Breasts on the Ruin
of our Reason. But the more
we know EMILIA, the more we
admire her. Love in regard to
others is Folly, but apply'd to
EMILIA 'tis the natural Result of
an able Judgment, the Result of
a bright and refin'd Understand-
ing.

NONE but the Ignorant are
EMILIA's Enemies; the best and
most exquisite Judges are her
Friends, who love her in propor-
tion to their Taste and Discern-
ment. If we daily find her more
and more charming, and our Pas-
sion for her to be always increas-
ing, this we may be sure of,
that

that our Penetration is great indeed.

SOME, 'tis confess'd, have no Occasion for so long, so tedious and deliberate a Contemplation. They are transported with her Perfections even before they understand 'em. They feel in their Hearts a kind of secret Inclination for her, they esteem and adore her. No sooner has she spoke, but they think her an absolute Mistress of Reason; her Humanity and Address appear to them beyond Comparison. Tho' they are Strangers to her Conduct and Deportment, by Instinct they think of her Virtue with Advantage; and when afterwards they consult their Reason, instead of confessing themselves mistaken, they highly commend and applaud their Prepossessions.

It is none of the least of EMILIA's Perfections to be always entertaining, and always the same. The most delightful Gayety at length becomes tedious; the most fertile Genius cannot always last; the most animated Vivacity either tires or disgusts you. Hence it is, that the Ladies have often recourse to some Caprices to entertain us; or else, they are oblig'd to introduce some Diversion to give new Spirit to the Conversation; but EMILIA pleases of her self alone, and is always pleasing; that SEMPER EADEM, that ETERNAL IDENTITY, never gives you the least Dissatisfaction, no not for a Moment. We think our selves happy if with others we can pass one agreeable Hour, but it would be matter of just Complaint, if one Minute with
her

her should be otherwise than agreeable. Let her Condition be what it will; see her on what Account you please; you are sure of going to a certain Pleasure, to a certain and never-failing Satisfaction.

I shall conclude this excellent Character with one Perfection, which is superior to those I have mention'd. She is Devout, but not Superstitious; she is Religious, but not Melancholy. She is not one of those who make a Miracle of every thing, neither is she apt to resign her Faith to I know not what foolish ridiculous Legends. She hates and detests that retir'd Temper, which insensibly instils into the Soul an Aversion to Pleasure, and a Hatred of Mankind.

SHE is far from thinking herself oblig'd to retire from the
World,

World, to worship God in the Horrors of Solitude; nor does she believe, that the withdrawing our selves from Society, and abandoning our Friends, whose Conversation was no less dear than pleasing to us, is to unite our selves to our Maker. She rather thinks it a foolish Self-Love, an obstinate, indiscreet Compliance with our own perverse irregular Imaginations. She hopes to find her Creator in the World, which is full of his Goodness, and the only proper Subject of his Providence. Here it is, where, with the Assistance of his divine Grace, she makes it the constant Business of her Life to enlighten her Reason, perfect her Morals, and direct her Conduct, both with respect to the Duties of this Life, and her Salvation in the next.

SEE

SEE here the Character of a Woman, *who never was, and never will be*, if it be possible to describe a Character that has no Existence. 'Tis rather the Idea, the imaginary Idea of a polite and beautiful Person. To endeavour to find it amongst the Men would be a vain and fruitless Attempt. They want that Sweetness, that inimitable Sweetness, which we so much admire in the Women; and I believ'd it less impossible, to find in a Woman that Strength of Reason, that sound Understanding which is common to Men; than in a Man those Charms and Graces, those inexpressible Charms and Graces, which are natural to the Women.

F I N I S.



